

[18 cont.]

134 The ground is covered with red sand (fox sand), which in the thorn bush areas changes to a firm, grayish-yellow; perhaps argillaceous sand. Chalk cliffs and other rocks are completely lacking. The Kaudum bed is perpetually covered with dense green grass. The sand pans have humous sand; only in the northeast near Schamatura is a peat-like swampy soil to be found with red, strongly ferruginous water. Forest fires are the order of the day, but they do little damage to the tree growth."

133 South of the Omuramba u Owambo there is a fairly large

134 number of limestone pans, which in part still contain water but are mostly dried up. The land there is drying up rapidly, according to both the Bushmen and the Europeans. During the rainy season the clayey soils are swampy, and at that time the

[136] dense bush forest is filled with myriads of mosquitoes, and
[164] malaria claims its victims from all races. The unhealthy situa-

648 tion, the difficulty of getting workers, and the irregularity of the rainfall have led to the abandonment of most of the farms outside Grootfontein, so that the Bushmen have actually gained ground there. The !Kung Bushmen outside the police zone live entirely according to their old customs and traditions. The in-

[578] individual kin groups are in part hostile to one another. A kind
[619] of hereditary feud exists with the Hei//om, who are often attacked because of the women. The !Kung live on good terms with the farms along the northern boundary (Duwib, Keitsas, Keibeb, Kuntsas, Neitsas, Foxhof). Many of them work there for

[464] certain periods of time, and quite a few permanently; in particular, they like to let women and children work on the farms.

[177] Mr. Cleark, the owner of Keibeb, has trained a large number of them to make charcoal. These Bushmen make the charcoal out

[439] in the wilderness and deliver it. It is then resold to the mottramite mine in Abenab. Until the establishment of the police zone, a perpetual state of war existed between the police and the Bushmen. There are constant battles between the Herero of Otjituo and the !Kung because of livestock thefts. The Herero attack the Bushmen on horseback and kill them from the saddle with the kirri.

The Bushmen, who are not accustomed to shooting at rapidly moving targets, usually come out the losers. Like the

[44 cont.]

Toothache

- 142 I rarely saw irregularities in the position of the teeth, and
 [515] never protruding or receding teeth. The only care given the
 teeth is the use of iron arrow points for toothpicks. The teeth are
 usually yellow, covered with dense layers of tartar, and because
 of the sand content of the vegetable diet, are quickly worn down
 ● 164 by chewing. Caries are extraordinarily common, but infections
 also occur through the exposure of the root canal as the teeth are
 753 worn down. If a person has a severe toothache, //Gauab has stuck
 a needle into it, and the doctor must be called to get it out. If
 there is no general discomfort, however, then no dsao are there.
 757 A little piece of wood is sharpened to a point at one end, held
 with the point against the root of the tooth, and then the tooth
 is knocked out with a stone. This instrument is called "oie."
 147 Small children suffer considerable pain when they teethe; some-
 753 times dsao (spirits of sickness) are also at work in this case. [Fig.
 17 appears here.]

Sore Throat

- 753 A sore throat means that //Gauab has made a cord and is
 755 drawing it tight around the patient's neck. The doctor must re-
 move the cord from the patient; it is about 30 centimeters long
 and is like the trap cord (//kao); everyone can see it after the
 treatment.

Colds (X'68)

- 164 Grippe takes many victims among the Bushmen every year,
 513 especially among those who are already tuberculous. In winter,
 colds are extraordinarily frequent, since the people lie almost
 naked around the fires. In the forest they are fairly well protected
 against the wind, but on the open plain the wind changes its di-
 rection at night while they are asleep, so that they not only catch
 cold but often receive severe burns around the stomach -- although
 this applies only to the men; the women sleep at a greater distance
 FROM THE FIRE.

[44 cont.]

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from the fire. As a cure for coughing and hoarseness, they chew the fibers of a sisal-like plant, which are twisted to make the trap cord. The plant is called kũi. It must be brought fresh from the forest. For chest pains, in recent times they have started drinking warm water to which much cooking salt is added.



Circulatory Diseases

As among the Central African Pygmies, we find strong sinuosity of the arteria temporalis even among more youthful individuals. The heart quickly wears itself out as a result of the exhausting way of life and the great amount of running. The people try to increase its capabilities in every way possible. In order to stop the pounding of the heart and to run longer, they take the leaves of a tree with red fruit (in-gui). These leaves are chewed and swallowed. If this does no good, they chew the root of the Na tree. If a person has a heart pain so that he cannot run, he takes roots of the Dormakar bush (!gu) and of the Hell bush (!gai !dsao), boils them both, and drinks the decoction. In case of angina pectoris, the skin of a boa constrictor is placed around the chest.

[413] Fig. 17. !Kung Instrument for Knocking Out Teeth; actual size [as shown in original text].

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Gastrointestinal Disorders

753 It is interesting to note that the doctrine of the importance
 [171] of the liver and gall bladder in the origin of disease, which we
 find among all primitive and civilized peoples up to the humoral
 medicine of the previous century, is already present among the
 Bushmen. When the gall bladder is full, one becomes sick and
 [755] vomits gall. Then the region of the liver is massaged, just as is
 done in the case of liver pains. Enlargement of the liver as the
 [164] result of chronic malaria is common. The moon, which dies
 [821] every month, also has gall sickness, and moonlight is the juice
 of the gall bladder vomited by it. Moonlight and gall are known
 [164] by the same word (goo). Spleen tumor is especially common
 757 among children. They have no medicine against splenalgia.
 278 They have no medicine for inducing vomiting. It is induced by
 putting the finger or a feather into the mouth. To stop vomiting,
 one chews little twigs of the goro tree. The bitter wood of the
 liana (X'áá-X'áñ) is chewed for stomach-ache. In case of con-
 [753] stipation the doctor must practice magic, for it is assumed that
 [755] the dsao have tied the stool in the intestine, and the doctor must
 loosen and extract the cord, just as in the case of an inflammation
 of the throat. The patient may not eat anything and drink very
 little. In case of diarrhea, even the bleeding kind, the same
 medicine is taken as in the case of stomach-aches. Intestinal
 147 worms are unknown. We already know from earlier reports that the
 262 gastrointestinal tract of the Bushman can take all kinds of things
 that we cannot take. As the result of habituation from early child-
 hood on, he can digest meat that has gone bad and the like, without
 any trouble (1). After a long period of hunger, he can consume

1. I myself witnessed a drastic example of this.
 I had brought a side of bacon from Swakopmund,
 which supposedly had been preserved for all
 eternity according to a special process. When I
 brought it out, it had a hideous smell, and in
 order to prevent the Bushmen from taking it and
 getting sick, I had it hung high on a tree. The

[45 cont.]

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Bushmen stared longingly at the discolored lump of fat. Finally they sent a deputation to me, saying that they wanted the bacon for their dogs. The moment they received it, it was skillfully divided according to families and consumed in the course of a great feast, without any harmful effects.

enormous quantities, but such excesses as a rule are followed by an indisposition. The day after a major feast, almost all of them lie in the sun with stomach-ache and gripes. In other words, even a Bushman should not be credited with the impossible with regard to food; many things that seem repulsive to us, such as earth-worms, lizards, thick grubs, mice, and the like, are in themselves not at all harmful to health, especially since the Bushman only eats them cooked or roasted. Bushmen who have grown up on the farms can take the same diet as the Whites or Blacks. On 147 the other hand, the wild Bushmen who have grown up on veldkost 262 and the flesh of wild animals cannot accustom themselves to the 648 work and prison diet of the Blacks. A term in jail of any great length means condemnation to a slow but sure death for most Bushmen. The prisoners show the symptoms of vitamin deficiency, become infirm, get edemata on their legs, dropsy, and unfailingly perish. In the initial stage severe sluggishness of the bowels sets in. Ample portions of fresh meat can keep the Bushman healthy even in imprisonment. The fact that Bushmen run away from the [464] farms is based in most cases upon their inability to endure any [146] longer the diet given them. The vitamin need of the Bushman who has grown up in the wilderness is undoubtedly much greater, and his longing for meat, which often appears pathological, can be explained as a physiological craving for vitamins.

Diseases of the Urogenital System

164 • Catarrhs of the bladder occur; in such cases a flat stone (755) is warmed in the fire and placed on the bladder region. Hematuria, evidently the result of nephritis, was twice treated by my friend

[45 cont.]

164 [753] Dr. Kasi. The people died. Very evil dsao were involved. The
 (192) terminology for the description of the external genitalia is by no
 (302) means as rich as among the Bantu. The women's pubic hair is
 (593) usually plucked out by their husbands. Hence, it is called virgin
 842 hair. The connection [46] between cohabitation and pregnancy
 (757) is known. Impotence and sterility occur; there is no medicine
 (278) for them. When menstruation fails to occur, nothing special is
 841 done. The menstruating woman may only eat with her husband
 (757) and may not go around tasting food. A warm stone is placed on
 853 the stomach for menstrual pains. Children are nursed at least
 (826) until the birth of the next child. The nipples are distinguished
 164 by a leathery firmness. Nevertheless, mastitis does occur.

The contention that venereal diseases are very widespread is incorrect; as such they are even unknown to the Bushmen. In isolated cases I have met Bushmen on the farms with vestigial gonorrhea. Syphilis is very rare among the wild Bushman.

Skin Diseases

The wild Bushman scarcely knows anything about skin care.

(515) Since there is a lack of both water and fat, the skin, which as a rule feels silky, soft, warm, and dry, becomes cracked, and infections easily occur. A chronic eczema (gari), evidently caused by a fungus, is very widespread. To combat it, they use the milky
 (278) sap of a plant called timba.
 (757)

Hair Diseases

A nonmalignant hair disease that is very widespread among all the Bantu, causing the hair to fall out in roughly circular spots, is also found among the Bushmen. In addition, as among the Bushmen of Naukluft, the so-called "porcelain head" occurs, a disease that destroys the entire hair base, and the head gleams like porcelain. The hair becomes gray relatively early. Loss of hair is rare; it usually occurs in the form of baldness characteristic of schizothymia. The rounded fingernails are worn fairly long; the toenails are often fissured.

[46 cont.]

Infectious Diseases

- 164 The Bushmen are plagued by the two most dangerous chronic infectious diseases, tuberculosis and malaria. Leprosy is absent. Malaria appears every year during the rainy season. Bisob [757] roots are then thrown in the fire, and the smoke is inhaled. Small [278] children more commonly die of it. I did not see any cases of black water fever or malarial cachexia.

[165] Tuberculosis is the common cause of death among the Bushmen. I saw bone tuberculosis and swellings of the glands, as well as advanced cases of lung and throat tuberculosis. The poor people are helpless, and the frequent colds further the process in a dangerous fashion. As nomads living in small groups, they are generally spared the epidemics of the Whites and Blacks. Once an epidemic has made its appearance among them, however, they die in great numbers. It is interesting to note that the Bushmen are aware that contagious diseases exist. As such, however, they only know the above-mentioned skin disease (gari).

753 The other infectious general diseases are explained as an attack by many spirits of sickness upon the horde.

Assistance at Birth

- 844 When a young woman anticipates her first confinement, she remains near the huts because she is afraid. The older women cheer her up, and then a resting place is made of dried grass. The [845] woman gives birth in a squatting position. In case of difficulties during delivery, the lower part of the body is massaged. Medicine or manual assistance to expedite the delivery is not given. The umbilical cord is cut off with a quartz knife and buried.

[47]

Wounds and Injuries

- 752 The most dangerous injury a Bushman can receive is through a poisoned arrow. The poisoned arrow is cut out, a piece of wood is held in the fire until it glows, and then it is used to

old woman who assisted at the confinement. Boys take the 553
surname of the mother and girls that of the father. Thus
/Uirob Geirob /Geibeb married a woman /Kao-tamas
Gamanis /Harus and begot two sons, namely //Otoab ≠Gonab
/Garub and Gogob Gomob /Garub, and one daughter Hoaras
/Geibes. Not uncommonly, in the case of boys only, the
father's surname with the suffix *mab*, meaning son of, is
added to the surname. Hence the names of //Otoab become
//Otoab ≠Gonab /Garub /Gribemab. This practice offers a
means of identifying relationship and is used for this purpose.
A person is as a rule called by the first name only. Nick-551
names are common and are given to children when quite
young. They are usually directed towards some physical
peculiarity, for example, *Eibarab*, the lad with the long face
and *Amgoseb*, the one with the pointed lips. They are often
retained throughout life.

The communities which have not been in contact with 164
civilization are remarkably free from infectious, contagious
and other diseases. Except during heavy rainy seasons when
malaria becomes unduly prevalent the incidence of disease is
very small among them. Sickness is in most instances 753
attributed to the non-observance of customary practices on
the part of the affected person, to magical influences exercised
by other persons or, when unduly prevalent, to something
going wrong with the perpetual fire. Treatment is adminis- 757
tered by relatives and friends or in cases of acute or prolonged
illness by an elder or doctor who is well versed in magical
practice. Herbs of various descriptions are employed both
internally and externally through incisions in the skin.
Inunction with medicated ointments is also extensively resorted
to. Surgical procedures are limited to incisions into the skin.
Burial of the dead is carried out almost universally at present. 764
Among the more primitive groups, however, the corpse is left 194
in the hut which is simply pressed down so as to cover it.
After a death has taken place the camp is deserted and not 768
occupied again. Old people who are no longer able to help 888
themselves are left in the werft with a supply of food and
water. The rest of the group then move off and do not
return to it again.

DANCES AND GAMES.

Dancing and games of various kinds enter very largely into 535
the lives of the Bushmen. Of these the dance takes the first
place among their social recreations. Some of the dances
such as the *tsei*, *hāigi-ho*, and *ge-ni* among the ≠Ao-//ēin
and *Aikwe* and the *hava-≠nab* among the *Hei-//om* would
appear to be of a religious nature, being danced only on
ceremonial occasions, for example, during the initiation cere-
monies. On the other hand dancing is often indulged in at
night for pure pleasure, especially in times of plenty. The

291 Both men were thin, brown-skinned, and wore nothing but loincloths, and they looked very out of place next to us, among our big trucks and boxes of equipment, squatting naked like two frogs against the long grass and reddening sky of their country. We sat by the fire to talk with them, and it was the old man who answered our questions. His name was

[194] Ukwane, and he seemed very old, for he spoke with a hesi-
[55] tant, cracked voice that faded into a whisper at the end of every phrase, and whenever some of us would leave or join the group at the fire he would stare intently at us, frowning, leaning forward a little because he could barely see us, his eyes being filmed with cataracts, hazy blue.

142 Ukwane had great wrinkles lengthwise down his belly where his paunch had shrunk. His hands were knobbed and his shoulders stiff, yet his legs were as supple as a baby's, for [54] he sat crouched with his knees in the air and his heels tucked up tight against his buttocks. His skin looked old, too, like [303] old leather, hardened and black like a glove that has been left in the rain, and his curly hair was disheveled, uncut, untidy with pieces of straw.

609 Our questions frightened Ukwane, and often he was at a loss for something to reply. He thought we were policemen coming to look for some lost horses, for somehow a rumor had reached into the farthest corners of the veld that a European farmer had lost seven horses and all the people in the veld were afraid for their lives. The first thing he said was that he hadn't seen any horses and certainly hadn't taken them himself. He was too old, he said. We told him that we were not policemen and, besides, had never heard of the horses, but he was not reassured. He coughed and turned to the young man, who looked at us with nothing to say.

609 The young man was also very shy, but had a greater dignity
194 than Ukwane because of his cool, proud bearing. He said

Peoples of the Veld and Sky

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greatly esteemed and is gathered from the crust of the pan in moist balls. Bushmen sprinkle the surface with water in order to roll up just the first layer where the salt lies. When the salt balls dry, Bushmen crumble them into their food, preferring salt to all sweet things and honey. Once when we asked some of the Gautscha people what they called themselves they replied with this phrase: "We are a salty people, who come from a salty place."

In the dry season, two hundred people came to Gautscha and lived in the bushes at the edge of the pan. This was an enormous number for any area to support, but all had indisputable rights to be there, for either their fathers had drunk at Gautscha or they had relatives whose fathers had; by the rather complicated system, any Bushman may drink water and gather veld food wherever his parents had a right to do so, or may live with either his parents, his brothers or sisters, or his wife at any place where the relative of his choice has rights. There was water but not much food at Gautscha, and all the people got thin and very hungry and sat around their fires at night with sweat pouring from their bodies but with nothing to eat; to make matters worse, one man coming for a visit proved to be ill and gave his disease to everyone. It was a disease that caused vomiting, high fevers, chest pains, and nosebleeds of great intensity—a woman whom I tried to cure bled all one morning with blood squirting from her nostrils, pouring down over her arms and hands and dripping from her elbows, making a dark pool on the ground. The disease struck all the people, from the youngest infants to the oldest grandparents, and all the people lay for days scattered all over the ground, too ill to move. We did everything we could, of course; we provided food and medicine, firewood and water, and took turns staying up all night to nurse the people. As it happened, everyone got better within fourteen

224 Toma's son said that he, too, had shot a buck during the
 866 last rainy season, but while the hunters were following it a
 857 rainstorm had come up and had washed the tracks away, forcing them to abandon the hunt, although for days they had searched the sky for the column of vultures that would show where the buck had fallen. Lions must have got it, said Toma, and eaten it in one night, and this was a great shame, for younger boys than his son had already proven themselves. They boy shrugged his shoulders at these words. He had been the first person we had met when we first had come to Gautscha Pan, and we had seen him in the veld, a naked child hardly more than an infant, standing in grass that came over his head with a toy bow and a wooden arrow in his hand. He was far from home, all by himself, but he had stood up to talk with us so boldly that our interpreter, vastly amused, had asked him what he would do if he met a lion, and with great self-possession Toma's son had said: "If he let me alone, I would let him go, but if he came for me, then we would fight."

Young Bushman boys do not always seem anxious to become adults. Like his son, in Toma's opinion, they prefer to play at hunting because as soon as they know how to hunt they have to, and hunting, say adult Bushmen, is very hard work. We felt, though, that it wouldn't be long before his son did succeed in killing an animal. Besides playing at hunting as a child he used to hunt beetles, moths, and large caterpillars by shooting them with thorns; but he was twelve now and seemed to have left his childhood behind, for while we talked his younger brother and sister played in the sand but he sat quietly with the men and listened.

163 Gao Big Feet and his wife, Dikai, Tu's sister, had had a
 164 second baby, a little boy named Dabe ma, Little Dabe. Their first child, Little Gashe, now four, was blind in one eye, pos-

Toma the Leader

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sibly as the result of a very prevalent eye disease. He had been¹⁶³ blind when we knew him as a baby; now his infected eye had¹⁶⁴ shrunk away, leaving a socket. As I watched him, I noticed that his good eye had become infected too and bothered him; he had developed a habit of turning his head from side to side, squinting with his good eye, trying to see depth or judge distance, and also a habit of rubbing both eyes with his knuckles. When Dikai saw me watching him she pointed to her own eyes, then to Dabe's, to show that she and Dabe, too, had the infection, and when I said that I would give her medicine when we got back to Nama she nodded. "I was waiting for you to come," she said.

Hearing me speak of medicine, Little Gashe glared at me¹⁶⁴ balefully. I had treated his eyes before and perhaps he remembered that the medicine was painful, or perhaps he was afraid that I would harm his eyes. He scrambled into his mother's lap to nurse and, facing toward her for safety, glared at me over her shoulder. Little Dabe, seeing this, climbed into Dikai's lap too and she had to nurse them both, one on^[162] each knee, at each breast. Her lap became a battlefield. They kicked and pushed and got in each other's way.

Dikai and her two boys were only half of Gao Feet's fam-⁵⁹⁵ ily, for he had another wife, his first wife, who had a daughter and a grandchild. We were not surprised that these people were not with Gao Feet; his two wives did not get along well. Since Dikai was young and pretty, Gao Feet spent his time with her. We asked Gao Feet where his first wife was, and he told us that she was living with her daughter's family and with Dikai's mother in a dry forest not far away where tsi was growing. We asked for other people, the other members of⁶²¹ Toma's large band, and Toma told us that they were well, living far away in a mangetti forest. Naturally, Toma's family had not seen this group for some time because of the dis-

648 work required on the farms, and also because certain members of the families were still here and now these families were broken forever.

- 164 On our way to see Short Kwi, the brother-in-law led us to the far end of the werf, behind a clump of bushes, to the scherm where Short Kwi lived. We saw him there, sitting with his wife and little daughter by the ashes of their fire, side by side, and we caught our breath at the sight of him. He looked tiny, no bigger than a child, and his flesh had wasted away so that his pale skin stretched tightly over all his bones. His leg was hidden by a blanket, his hands were as thin and fragile as a girl's, and his eyes were huge. He looked up at us when we came and smiled wanly, wryly, and his wife and daughter looked up at us and his wife also smiled wanly, but his daughter did not smile at all. The first thing Short Kwi did was to rearrange the blanket over his foot to hide his toes, but not before we had seen them, dry and black, dead entirely like the toes of a mummy. His leg was the first thing in his mind, but this was natural; we reminded him of better days.

302 We sat down at his fire to talk, all of us who had come from
824 Nama and most of the people from his werf, and his wife gave those of us from Nama a palmful of sa, the finely powdered yellow-green leaves that smell halfway between roses and sage. We crossed our faces with it, sprinkling a stripe up the bridge of our noses to our foreheads and another stripe across our cheeks. It smelled very nice, a sweet present to give to someone who has arrived from a long journey. Hours later it was still fragrant and we could smell it, faintly, for days.

- 164 We asked Short Kwi to show us his leg and as he started to unwind the blanket the Bushmen from Nama leaned forward, fascinated, but the other Bushmen did not look because they had seen it before. Short Kwi drew back the blan-

Short Kwi the Hunter

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ket and revealed a tiny, skinny stick that was his leg wrapped in some kind of rag, bound by a thong that tied the calf to the healthy thigh above, with the black foot showing below, and then he slowly and carefully unwound the thong and then the rag and opened it.

For once the people of Nama had not exaggerated a misfortune. The leg was even worse than they had described, all dead and black at the ankle, and above that, rotted away down to the bone, which was gray now, but while the foot was rotting and dry, the leg was rotting and wet and oozing a little black slime or juice. It was gangrene. A faint stench rose. Those of us who had not seen it had to look away, and Short Kwi, perceiving this, looked calmly down at the ground, at his ruined black leg, and he wrapped the rag around it again, tied his calf to his thigh with the thong, and covered it all with the blanket.

Short Kwi's wife had watched the whole thing with calmness and composure, her hands in her lap, and when the leg was covered she opened one of her hands, revealing a palm-ful of little white beads, which she began to drop, one by one, into a tiny bag she wore around her neck. With her head bent to see the mouth of the bag she looked very girlish and young; someone said something unusual, an unfamiliar word, and Short Kwi glanced at his wife to see if she had heard it but saw instead what she was doing, and he looked at her with such a deep look of adoration and affection that I wondered how it was she didn't feel it and look up. The word was the word for European doctor, *docteri*, which is not part of the usual vocabulary. Short Kwi's wife had not understood it and when she had finished dropping the beads into the bag she whispered to ask her husband what it meant. He answered her softly, in a masculine, affectionate way, and the other people chimed in, so for a moment everyone was speaking except

- 164 Short Kwi's wife, who looked around at them all gravely, listening, and when they had finished she nodded her head. "A medicine man of Europeans," they said. "So," said she.

[753] We talked about the foot for a while, for although he had covered it we could still see the toes. The people of the werf described how Short Kwi was bitten and everyone claimed credit for his part in saving Short Kwi's life. One man had killed the snake, another had cut the fang punctures, and others had given advice at the time and later. The leg had swelled enormously and the medicine men had cut the swollen skin to let blood; the scars of this still showed on the healthy thigh above the blanket. All the people seemed very depressed when talking about it, though; for one reason, they ate meat less often, but also they truly admired him and did not seem to enjoy watching the disaster. Toma asked Short Kwi how he felt and Short Kwi said he thought that his leg had seemed to be getting a little better during the last few days.

- 582 It was almost evening, and we heard voices singing in the veld. Two women and a young girl were coming home from a trip for veld food. These three were also very happy to see us and the little girl kissed me but not the men, then asked for her mother, who lived at Nama and whom she had not seen for seasons, and we told her that her mother was well. The girl had been newly married and she was as pretty as she could be, with lots of beads, and with long ornaments of tsi nuts hanging beside her face. She wore a fine kaross which she had rubbed with red powder, often a sign to men that a girl is menstruating, as perhaps she was, that men may be careful not to touch her and endanger their powers to hunt. Marriage seemed to have agreed with her. She looked very

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Short Kwi the Hunter

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happy. She was only ten, but already she had lost her childish belly, although her breasts had not yet begun to grow. ³⁸² [745]

Now everyone was in the werf and people had begun to go ⁵⁷³ back to their fires, leaving Short Kwi alone. When most people were gone, Short Kwi's brother-in-law squatted beside ⁵¹⁴ him and, taking his injured leg, began laboriously to help him ¹⁶⁴ move toward the veld, toward a little pathway that we had not noticed before. Short Kwi's wife had cleared the path; it led to a place in the veld where Short Kwi could urinate, and slowly, painfully, Short Kwi and his brother-in-law moved down it, the brother-in-law duckwalking, carrying the bad leg while Short Kwi—he who once could run great elands down—edged himself forward on his buttocks, using his hands to brace himself and his good leg to pull himself along.

We were not at his fire when he got back, but we could see ¹⁶⁴ him through the trees, inching, and then, when Short Kwi was alone with his wife and daughter, we could watch him sitting by his fire, looking idly around. He was like a wild goose with pinioned wings, squatting there before his fire, watching the sky, the veld, and other people come and go.

Those of us from Nama made a camp apart from the werf, ³⁶¹ through long grass as high as our chests, inside a little glade ⁵²¹ of thorn trees. We cleared some of the grass and built a fire, and even then the Bushmen could not stop talking about Short Kwi, although they tried to change the subject; they spoke of him creeping along on his buttocks, even this impossible without someone to help, and all because he had failed to notice an adder that was waiting in his path. Of course, the Bushmen said, he was lucky to be alive. I felt that he was luckier than they supposed, because of his wife, that ⁵⁷³ quiet, gracious, gentle, pretty woman, and his grave little daughter, the image of her mother. The people felt, said

132 LATE in December or early in January the rains of summer—the “big rains”—begin. This is the season of water. Water collects in the hollows of the land; it seeps into the pans, changing them into shallow lakes; it melts the baked clay in the *omuramba* bottoms, and turns the Kalahari green.

132 This is the season when two nuts, the *tsi* and the *mangetti*—the most important and abundant of the wild desert foods—begin to mature. By 262 March, the *mangetti* forests sound with the falling nuts. Beside the summer storms—when water piles up uselessly on the reverberating earth—days on end are cloudy and, sometimes, a fine mist falls over parts of the northern Kalahari through the day and into the night. Now, the people eat many fruits. In the deeps of green thickets, ponderous flowers droop on slender vines. Spring and summer, the times of bounty, are also the seasons of disease.

● [164]

132 By the end of April, the afternoon skies begin to clear, the air dries, the wind seeks. It is autumn. In April, the *tsi* nuts ripen and the pods split, turning out their brown wealth. The many desert roots cease their activity and become firm and full, safe in

persists into the winter dry season (Silberbauer 1965).

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The fruit of the baobab tree, Adansonia digitata, is another of the major foods. It is most important during winter but tends to rot if left on the ground and therefore cannot be eaten in all months of the year.

The vegetable ivory palm, Hyphaene ventricosa, has two edible parts. The fruit of the mature form is abundant but yields very little of food value. The dwarf form of the palm lacks fruit but the heart of the stalk is an important item of diet. This latter food has two distinct disadvantages.

It is difficult to collect because the stiff palm fronds must be laboriously hacked away to reach the heart. Also those who eat its fibrous pulp complain of stomach cramps and diarrhea. Therefore it is eaten only when more desirable foods are not available.

[164] The nut of the morula tree, Sclerocarya caffra, is a delectable food, even tastier than the mongongo nut. But it rates low on the important criterion of ease of eating. The nut meats are small and crumble easily; so they must be carefully picked out of the shell with a thorn. This operation requires patience and it was observed that the women ate many more morula nuts than did the men. The morula tree is also important in subsistence because one of the species of beetle used in arrow poison feeds on its leaves.

16: Lee E-5 (1963-1965) 1966 FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

153.

312 at the waterholes consists primarily of roots and bulbs of the
221 genera: Eulophia, Vigna, Walleria, and Coccinia, and the edible
824 sap of Acacia spp. and Terminalia sericea. It is this time of
year that the heart of the dwarf vegetable ivory palm is eaten,
• [164] (Hyphaene). Those who eat its fibrous pulp experience stomach
cramps and diarrhea, but, as the Bushmen say, it make one's
"mouth work" and gives one a sensation of a full stomach.

221 Hunting is arduous business in the heat and men who go out in
224 the early morning find it necessary to spend the mid-day hours
resting in the shade. The principal animal killed is the
springhare.

132 The first rains are convectional thundershowers. Their
distribution is spotty. A storm may briefly inundate one area
and miss entirely another area only a mile away.

312 The Bushmen observe the storm clouds travelling across
222 the horizon and try to judge where the showers have drenched
[821] the ground. They then set out in family groups in the direc-
tion of the rains. If they find that water has collected in
the hollows of mongongo trees, they will stay in the nut groves
for several days and eat nuts until the water is exhausted.
They then fill their karosses with nuts and return to the per-
manent water. If, on reaching the nut groves, they find that
no water has collected they will be forced to fill their karosses
with nuts and return to camp the same day. In certain areas

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Bushman FX10

NATURAL DIVISIONS AND VEGETATION 9

and Middle Kalahari that it is scarcely possible to traverse parts of the country, and many routes can only be followed at such times as the pools have been filled by recent rain.

The winter climate is delightful. The heat during the other months is great, but there are occasional short, sudden, and therefore treacherous changes from extreme heat to cold. Malarial fever is prevalent, being particularly severe in the neighbourhood of the water-courses and other low-lying places, where during and immediately after the season of the heavy rains the dense bush, thick undergrowth, and rank vegetation afford excellent shelter to mosquitoes. The rainfall varies from about 8 inches in the south-west to more than 20 inches in the north and east; almost all the rain falls in the summer months, December to April, and chiefly in thunderstorms. Except in the north, none of this rainfall reaches the sea, the water being either evaporated directly or flowing into shallow depressions such as Lake Ngami and the Great Makarrikarri salt-pan. Over wide areas the country is so flat that the rain drains off partly in one direction, partly in another.

The principal river in the north is the Okavango, which, rising in the Angola highlands, flows into the Okavango marshes, a region about a hundred miles in length and from ten to fifty miles in width. From this reed-choked swamp the river at certain seasons overflows on the north into the Kwando and so reaches the Zambesi, and on the south into Lake Ngami and the Botletle River, which feeds the Makarrikarri depression and the great sandy plains of the north-east. During the rains the whole of this region is covered with wide stretches of water, often extending far beyond the horizon. The Nossob, Molopo, and Kuruman Rivers in the south, which formerly drained the greater part of the Middle and Southern Kalahari into the Orange River, are now for the most part sandy beds bordered with trees, and water is seldom found except towards their heads. At the present time no water leaves this part of the Kalahari except through evaporation. The country appears to be suffering from progressive desiccation, but there is said to be good evidence of an abundant supply of water not far beneath the surface.

The rainfall, though very small in the west and south, enables a fair amount of vegetation to flourish, chiefly grasses, shrubs, and trees, except in certain areas where the soil is too saline. The great plains, more especially in the south, are covered with tough sun-bleached Bushman grass (*Aristida brevifolia*), growing knee-high and giving

NATURAL DIVISIONS AND VEGETATION II

Northern Damaraland to the south of the Karst region is a tract of extensive grass plains, from which emerge isolated eminences and a few mountain chains superimposed on the main plateau. Further south the whole country attains its highest elevation of over 6,000 feet in the Khomashochland of Windhoek district, while south and east of Windhoek rise the great Avas Mountains (highest altitude 7,886 feet), which form the watershed of South-West Africa. Deep clefts and gorges, widely-extended plains and high rugged peaks are characteristic of this region; valleys, too, expand in among the mountain groups, and are often of extreme fertility. To the south succeed the plateaus and table-topped mountains of Great Namaqualand. This part of the country is dominated by two longitudinal trenches, that of the Konkop to the west, that of the Great Fish River to the east. West of the former is a series of mountain ranges and elevated plains, among them being the Tsaras and Tiras Mountains and the Huib plateau, while to the east of it is the Hanam plateau. Still further east, beyond the Great Fish River, the Urinanib plateau overlooks the Kalahari. In the south-east the isolated Great and Little Karas Mountains rise to considerable heights, but the country is for the greater part flat or rolling. Eastward and north-east of these elevated tracts, the upland assumes a very level character, composed mainly of sand dune formation merging eventually everywhere into the sandveld of the Kalahari.

Although the northern half of South-West Africa falls within the Tropic of Capricorn, the climate is on the whole temperate rather than tropical. The extreme north and north-east are hot and trying to Europeans, and malaria is very prevalent there during the autumn; but on the central plateau the dryness of the air makes the summer heat easily supportable, and the country generally is healthy, with clear, bracing atmosphere and much wind. The winters are cold, and ice often forms upon the central and southern plateaus. Rain falls during the summer from October to April, but rarely during the winter season. The mean annual rainfall varies with the latitude, from 6 inches in the south to 12 inches in the centre and reaching 22 inches in the north.

Except for those rivers forming part of the northern and southern frontiers of the country—the Kunene, Okavango, and Orange—there are practically none which carry surface water all the year round. Almost all are simply dry sandy watercourses which become torrents for a short period after rain; but save in very wet seasons few of these

20 THE COUNTRY OF THE KHOISAN

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136 into Damaraland on the west, and on the east by way of the Transvaal bushveld and Natal to the south coast regions of Knysna and George. From the south it is naturally only sea birds that can be contributed to the fauna; the petrel family forms the characteristic element from this quarter, comprising a number of small petrels and whale birds, the "Cape pigeon" and "Cape hen", shearwaters and several albatrosses. The jackass penguin, breeding in immense numbers on the small islands off the south and west coasts, represents a truly antarctic contribution.

The reptilian fauna is particularly abundant, lizards and snakes especially being very numerous in many parts of the country. Of the latter, the cobra (genus *Naia*), the puffadder (*Bitis arietans*), and the ringhals (*Serpedon haemachates*) are among the more formidable poisonous representatives; the mamba (*Dendrasdis angusticeps*), most deadly of all, is found principally in the eastern parts of the country. The crocodile is extinct in the Cape Province and the Orange Free State, but is still found in the rivers of the eastern lowlands and the Northern Kalahari. The Arachidna are notable for the abundance of scorpions, and among the spiders for the large number of ground-dwelling forms living in burrows, with or without trapdoors, beneath stones, or as free-living hunting forms.

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[262] The insect fauna as a whole presents an extraordinarily large number of species, many of them extremely abundant. Locusts are conspicuous among the common plagues of the country, and from time to time issue in devastating swarms from their breeding grounds in the Kalahari and other more or less inaccessible dry regions. Bees, wasps, and ants are very richly represented; ants' eggs and the honey of wild bees provide the Bushmen with an important element of their diet. Mosquitoes and horse-flies are rarely very troublesome except in the moister parts of the country; the anophelene mosquito conveys malaria in the northern parts of South-West Africa and the Kalahari, as well as in the Low Veld of the east, while the tsetse fly (*Glossina*) carries cattle disease (nagana) in the Ngami country and a few localities to the east, but no case of sleeping-sickness has been known to occur. The widely-distributed termites are often destructive, but provide many animals and birds with their chief subsistence. Butterflies and moths, beetles and bugs all appear in numerous varieties, and one species of beetle, *Cladocera nigro-ornata*, forms the most potent ingredient in the arrow-poison of the Kalahari Bushmen.

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40 DISTRIBUTION AND TRIBAL DIVISIONS

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727 before these destructive raids as being in any way excessive.¹ In Orange Free State and Basutoland, too, where at one time the Bushmen were also very numerous, there are now apparently no more than a few stray individuals.

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164 Even in South-West Africa their numbers seem to have declined a good deal within recent years. The German official estimate for 1913 gave the Bushman population of this territory as 8,098,² which may be contrasted with the 1926 figure of 3,600. Allowing for probable inaccuracies in the two estimates, there does nevertheless appear to be an undeniable decrease. This may be attributed largely to the ravages of disease, especially malaria, although other factors also must be considered. The present area of Bushman occupation in the North-West Kalahari is largely infested with malaria, and all observers agree that the Bushmen suffer heavily from this disease. Thus Kaufmann put the numbers of the Auen in 1908 at approximately 3,000, but adds that in the following year more than half the tribe was swept away by malaria, while in 1917, 1923, and 1925 the same disease was again attended by a considerable mortality among all the Bushman tribes in this area.³ Infanticide, a practice definitely recorded among the North-Western tribes, also tends to keep the numbers down; while the disappearance of game and the enforcement against the Bushmen of the game laws serve the same end by making their mode of subsistence even more precarious than it was at the best of times.

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161 There seems little doubt that the Bushmen are steadily dying out as a race. What relentless persecution at the hands of other peoples has not achieved is being slowly accomplished by disease and racial intermixture. Racially pure Bushmen are already in a minority, and their ultimate absorption by their neighbours is probably inevitable.

HOTTENTOTS

Racial History

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144 By the time when European contact with South Africa was first established, the Bushmen in the Cape had already been reduced to living in isolated groups scattered about among the more numerous

¹ Fritsch, op. cit., 395.

² *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und der Südsee 1912/1913: Amtliche Jahresberichte*, p. 395.

³ Kaufmann, op. cit., 136, 159; *Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa*, No. 9, 1928, p. 990.

102 SOCIAL HABITS AND CUSTOMS

276 smoke sucked through the water by deep breaths into the lungs. A somewhat similar form of pipe is found among the Heikum and the Kung, but apparently water is not used here in smoking. Further east, among the Hiechware, a method of ground-smoking is found [177] similar to that obtaining among the neighbouring Bantu peoples. A small hole is made in the ground, into which the man puts the tobacco; he then inserts his pipe-stick through a small tunnel and smokes.¹

● [164] Dagga is mixed with tobacco or smoked by itself whenever obtainable. The habit is said seriously to affect those addicted to it, both physically and morally. When taken in slight quantities the herb has no visible ill-effects, but excessive indulgence is most deleterious to the health, and if persisted in sometimes causes mental aberration and frenzy.

273 Few of the Bushmen know how to make any kind of liquor themselves. The only exception, perhaps, are the Namib Bushmen, who, [177] after the manner of their Hottentot neighbours, brew a kind of mead out of honey. They are very partial to this drink, which plays an essential part in all their festivities.² The other Bushmen in general also do not seem to trade for any liquor, although they all appreciate alcohol and native beer when it is given to them. The Hiechware, [439] however, are said to be excessively fond of native beer, which they obtain by barter from the BeChwana; and, according to Dornan, they contrive to get drunk whenever they can.³ Drunkenness as a rule is very exceptional among the rest of the Bushmen.

SEXUAL LIFE AND MARRIAGE

Conditions and Forms of Marriage

114 There is very little information about the relations of the sexes
836 before marriage. Either the subject is not mentioned at all by our authorities, or it is curtly dismissed in a short sentence. Kaufmann, for instance, reports of the Auen merely that premarital intercourse hardly ever seems to occur⁴; Lebzelter writes of the Kung that chastity is insisted upon before marriage⁵; while, on the other hand, all Miss Bleek has to say in this connection about the Naron is that

¹ Sparrman, *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, I, 164 sq.; Stow, *Native Races of S. Africa*, 32; Werner, "Ueber die Heikum- und Kungbuschleute," 257; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 122-3.

² Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 168; Seydel, "Aus der Namib," 104.

³ Op. cit., 121.

⁴ Op. cit., 156.

⁵ Op. cit., (16).

KNOWLEDGE OF DISEASE AND DOCTORING

- 164 The Bushmen in their own environment and leading their own mode of life seem on the whole to be a healthy and hardy people. Those communities in the north which have not been much in contact with civilization are said to be remarkably free from infectious, contagious, and other diseases. Except during heavy rainy seasons, when malaria becomes unduly prevalent, the incidence of disease is very small amongst them. Malaria, however, carries off many victims, for the Bushmen do not seem able to withstand it better than other peoples. Kaufmann, as we have seen, records that in 1909 the mortality caused by it was especially high, whole villages dying out, so that the numbers of the Auen were reduced to less than half. Seiner, another trustworthy observer, states that [114] among the Kung fully 20 per cent of the deaths that occur, especially of children, may be attributed to it; and it is officially recorded that in the years 1917, 1923, and 1925 "large numbers" of Bushmen died from it along the north-eastern and eastern borders of South-West Africa. Smallpox, typhoid, dysentery, and phthisis are also mentioned as occurring in these parts, the latter being promoted by [276] excessive indulgence in tobacco and dagga smoking. Where contact [177] with other peoples is frequent, syphilis is often found, as well as measles, influenza, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, and other European diseases. European clothing and dwellings have a bad effect upon the Bushmen. They are particularly susceptible to pulmonary affections when removed from their natural surroundings, and a considerable number of those who have suffered from bronchitis, pneumonia, etc., subsequently succumb to tuberculosis. When [648] imprisoned, as many of them are in South-West Africa for cattle stealing or breaking the game laws, they rapidly decline in strength and die in great numbers, however kindly treated by the gaol authorities.¹

753 Sickness in most instances is attributed to the non-observance of customary practices on the part of the person affected, to evil magic exercised against him by other persons, to the malicious interference of the ghosts of dead people who send the "spirits of disease" into the patient's body, or to some similar supernatural cause. Treatment

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¹ Kaufmann, "Die Auen," 136, 139; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 293; Dorman, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 140-4; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 29-30; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 91; *Official Year Book of S.A.*, No. 8, pp. 983-6 *passim*.